

REPORT

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. Number in Sinkiang: There were the following number of Sibos (Hsi-po), Solons (So-lun) and Manchus (Man), in Sinkiang. The Sibos numbered 9,203, or slightly less than .25% of the total population of Sinkiang; the Solons numbered 2,489, or .067%; and the Manchus only 670, or .018%. Despite the fact that Governor Sheng Shih-tsai split these three into distinct groups, all three belong to the Manchu tribal coalition. Grouped together, they total 12,362, or slightly over .33% of the total population of Sinkiang.
2. History in Sinkiang: The Sibos, Solons and Manchus all belong to the Manchu tribal coalition. In language, as in customs and other respects, their points of similarity are such that the three "races" must be considered as essentially one people. They conquered all of China and all but disappeared from sight when their rule was terminated in 1911. Only in Sinkiang have the Manchus been able to preserve the characteristics which set them off from other peoples.

The first large groups of Sibos, Solons and Manchus came to Sinkiang in the second half of the eighteenth century, in the course of the campaigns against Dzungar Mongols. They were sent there by Emperor Ch'ien-lung (1711 to 1799) to consolidate Chinese holdings by acting as administrators and troops in this frontier region, being promised by him that when they had completed ten years of service in Sinkiang others would follow to replace them. They took their wives and other movable possessions with them, but as the time came for their service to be ended they learned that they had been forgotten. They thus were forced to remain in the far land to which they had marched.

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Kure, a brick fortress, was built by them in the strategic Ili Valley, some 30 miles west of Kuldja. This served as the center from which to administer the region as a whole and to command the Manchu garrisons stationed throughout the province. The Solons, who came from the upper Nonni River in northwestern Manchuria and famed for their skill in archery, took rich agricultural lands on the north bank of the Ili River. The Sibos, who originated in central Manchuria and were utilized as scribes and clerks, settled on the south bank of the Ili River. During the 1911 Revolution most of the city Manchus in Sinkiang were massacred, but the village communities defended themselves and survived. During the reign of Governor Sheng Shih-tsai (12 Apr 33 to 2 Sep 44), a native of Manchuria, many Manchurians came to Sinkiang and thus augmented the existing Manchu population.

3. Language: The Sibos, Solons and Manchus have the same writing and same structure of the spoken language, but pronounce their words differently. All three have an alphabet consisting of 28 letters. The original differences in speech appear to have lessened by the use of Manchu as an official language in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so that the three forms, as spoken in Sinkiang, are mutually comprehensible. Manchu still remains as the literary language. A special point of interest is the fact that while the Manchu language in China proper has become corrupt in the course of years, the original written and spoken language has remained intact in Sinkiang.
4. Concentrations: At one time Manchus were scattered throughout the large cities of Sinkiang, but with the passing of time, most of them were absorbed by the Chinese. With the exception of some 1,700 in Chuguchak (Tahohang), Farbagatai Region, virtually all of those classed as Manchus presently live in the Ili Region. The three largest urban concentrations are in Hweiyuan (Ili), Suiting and Kuldja (Ining). In the Ili Valley they continue to predominate in a few villages on either side of the river, in territory that is predominantly Kazakh and Uighur.
5. Occupations: For the most part, the Manchus live by agriculture, though this is supplemented by sheep raising and hunting. They have learned how to farm, the lands distributed to them and are also becoming known as skilled breeders of cattle. They still pay no taxes, a privilege which dates back to their garrison days. There are free schools for their children and all their traditional customs are jealously maintained. To a considerable extent they have succeeded in maintaining their traditional way of life, even to the point of preserving their military ability.
6. Summary: Despite their small number, the military ability, tradition of service in administration and generally forward-looking attitude of the Manchus make them a force to be reckoned with in Sinkiang. Their immediate future must involve a measure of local self-government if they are not to constitute a thorn in the flesh of the surrounding majorities.

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